

Innovation Forum

The Warfare Analysis and Research (WAR) Department has initiated the Innovation Forum, a project designed to gain insights from the private sector on issues of concern to the Navy across a range of fields. Working with Raytheon's Integrated Defense Systems, the Department is bringing together representatives from diverse organizations and disciplines to consider selected issues from multiple perspectives.

On 14-15 December 2004, the Department hosted the inaugural Innovation Forum at the Naval War College. This event involved senior participants from the defense industry, academia, technology-oriented organizations, finance, economic forecasting, and the military. Participants received briefings on current views within the Navy and the Office of the Secretary of Defense on the evolving strategic environment. They examined a model of alternative futures and offered thoughts on how the world could unfold in both good and bad ways over the next twenty years. Participants were asked to view the future from a number of different perspectives (individual, state, and system) across a variety of areas (politics, economics, technology, social/cultural issues, environment, and security). They were then asked what impact emerging trends might have on areas affecting any large organization, but particularly the Navy: personnel, training, education, economics, leadership, shore facilities, fleet infrastructure, materiel, doctrine, and organization. The Forum concluded with a discussion of foreign policy objectives, military roles and missions, and what kind of force posture would create the right balance between hedging against the rise of a competitor and continuing the war against terrorism. Along with open discussion, the workshop included the use of networked groupware to allow simultaneous input of ideas and instantaneous polling of participants. A report is available on the Department's Internet website, <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/wardept/>.

Over the next few weeks, members of the Department, accompanied by personnel from Raytheon's Integrated Defense Systems, will meet with senior executives of several large corporations, academic institutions and research organizations to discuss the findings of the workshop and garner further insights on the issues considered. Final results will be briefed to strategic planners on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations.

Future Innovation Forums will focus on more specialized areas of concern where the Navy and the private sector face similar challenges. For example, drawing on issues raised during the Forum the Department plans to conduct workshops on personnel issues at the Fifth Annual Navy Workforce Research and Analysis Conference, 18-19 April. Results of these future phases of the Innovation Forum will be briefed to appropriate organizations within the Navy staff.